

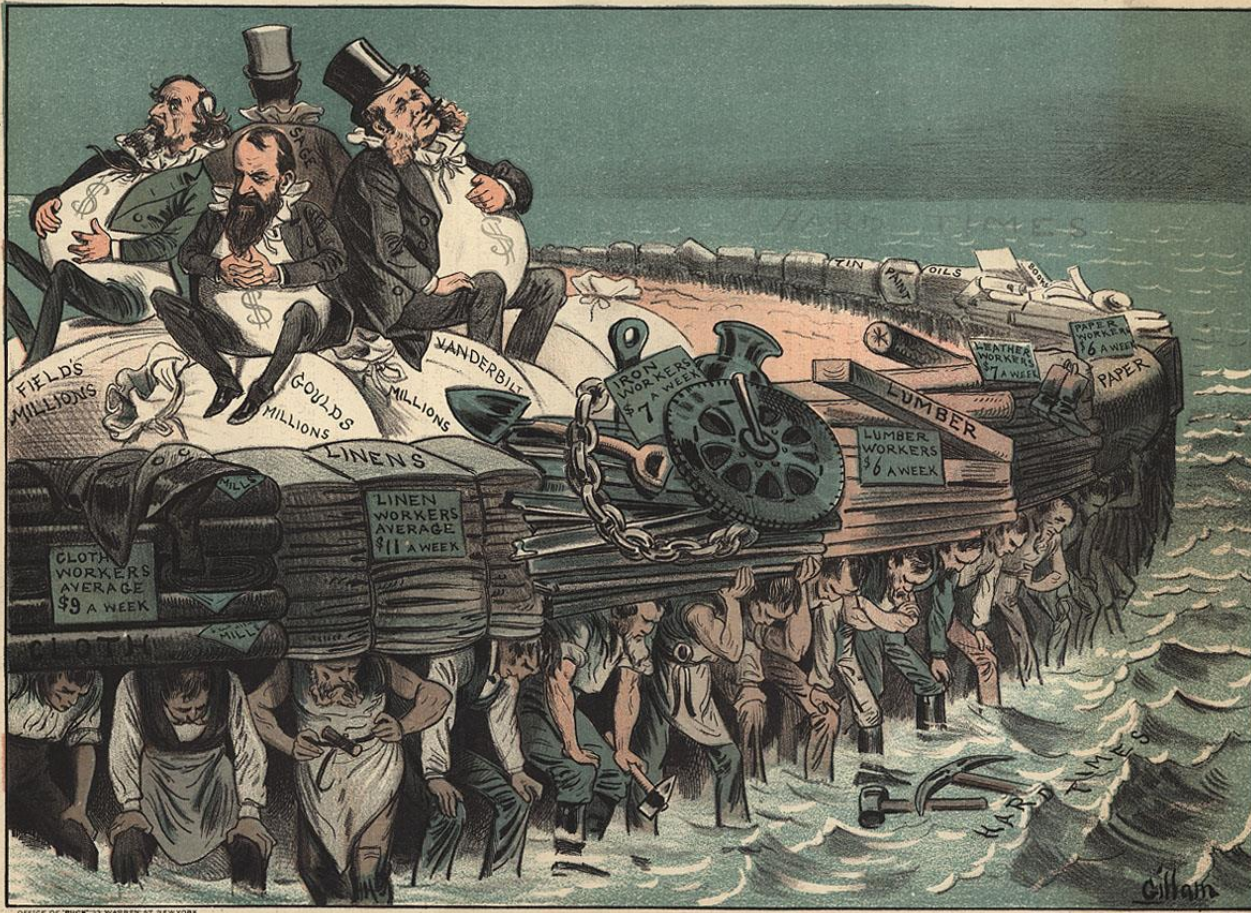
THE GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVISM

All That Glitters Is Not Gold: The Need for Regulation and Reforms

THE GILDED AGE

The term gilded means covered in a thin layer of gold. It is a term familiar to those who hawk cheap jewelry. When Mark Twain used this phrase to describe the historical period in which he lived in worked, he meant to criticize the period. The wealthy industrialists like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and J.P. Morgan were doing quite well. But just beneath the surface, most Americans were struggling to survive.

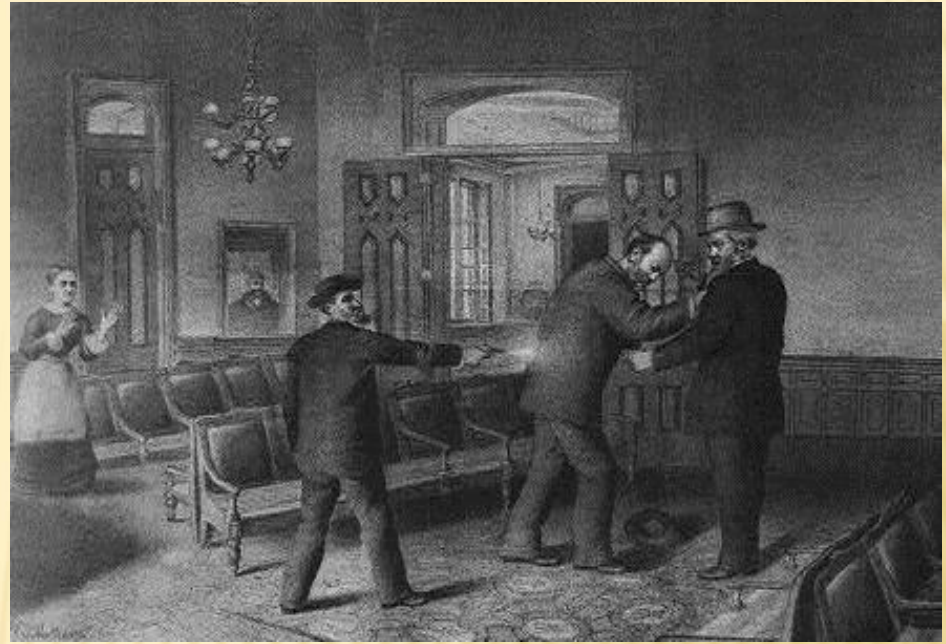
THE GILDED AGE – POLITICAL CARTOON



THE PROTECTORS OF OUR INDUSTRIES.

Even as the wealthiest Americans reached historic heights in terms of prosperity and productivity, the working classes were being exploited and taken advantage of. While a small minority were become wealthy beyond their wildest dreams, most Americans were toiling away without any hope of social mobility or an improvement of their quality of life. And how exactly did these Great Industrialist make their money?

Ever since the Presidency of Andrew Jackson in 1828, the “Spoils System” had allowed Presidents to select members of the Civil Service. Presidents awarded high paying jobs with excellent benefits and pensions to their close friends and their most devoted political supporters. James A. Garfield wanted to end this. He desired to improve the government’s bureaucracy by hiring only the most qualified candidates for jobs in the Civil Service. When he refused to hire Charles Guiteau – a supporter who was seeking a government job, Guiteau murdered the President. Chester Arthur and the United States Congress made civil service reform a top priority in the name of the martyred President. In 1883, the Pendleton Act was passed, and the Civil Service Commission was created in order to administer competitive exams for government jobs. This way, the most competent and able applicants would be hired, not simply the President’s most loyal friends and supporters.



In 1883, President James Garfield was murdered by an angry office seeker. Congress passed the Pendleton Act in order to reform government hiring practices. The Civil Service Commission administered tests to applicants for government jobs so that only those with merit would gain positions in the bureaucracy.

THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JAMES A. GARFIELD, 1883

When the Sherman Anti-Trust Act was passed in 1890, it was intended to be used by the government in order to prevent large corporations from engaging in anti-competitive practices. The government would have the power to sue and break apart any company which was hurting consumers (customers) by reducing competition and raising prices in a way that was unfair. Unfortunately, the law would sit on the books for over a decade before anyone used it correctly. The first groups that were sued using the Sherman Anti-Trust Act were labor unions. Eventually, though, President Theodore Roosevelt began to target companies that were damaging the free market: trusts like the Northern Securities Company (a railroad), Armour Meats, and the Standard Oil Company.



THE SHERMAN ANTI-TRUST ACT OF 1890



JANE ADDAMS

Jane Addams created Hull House in 1886 in order to assist the working poor in and around Chicago. The Hull House provided food, shelter, day care, and vocational training for immigrants and the working poor who were trying to make a living in the United States.

MAJOR GOALS OF PROGRESSIVISM:

- **The Expansion of Democratic Participation:** Voting Rights, Laws to Empower Voters (Recall, Initiative.)
- Helping the Poor and Improving Labor Conditions and the **Goals of Unions.**
- Equal Rights and Greater Political Participation for Women – **Woman's Suffrage.**
- **The Temperance Movement** – Prohibition.
- The Regulation of Corporations and for Economic Justice – **Trustbusting.**
- **Conservation** of the Environment.

MUCKRAKERS – JOURNALISTS ON CRUSADE

Journalists who sought to expose problems in society through their work were called muckrakers. Magazines and books were written in order to motivate Americans – and the United States government – to solve these problems. Problems addressed by muckrakers included corporate greed, the difficulties of the urban poor, corruption in government, and alcoholism.

The Shame of the Cities – Lincoln Steffens

A History of the Standard Oil Company – Ida Tarbell

How the Other Half Lives – Jacob Riis

The Jungle – Upton Sinclair

McClure's Magazine

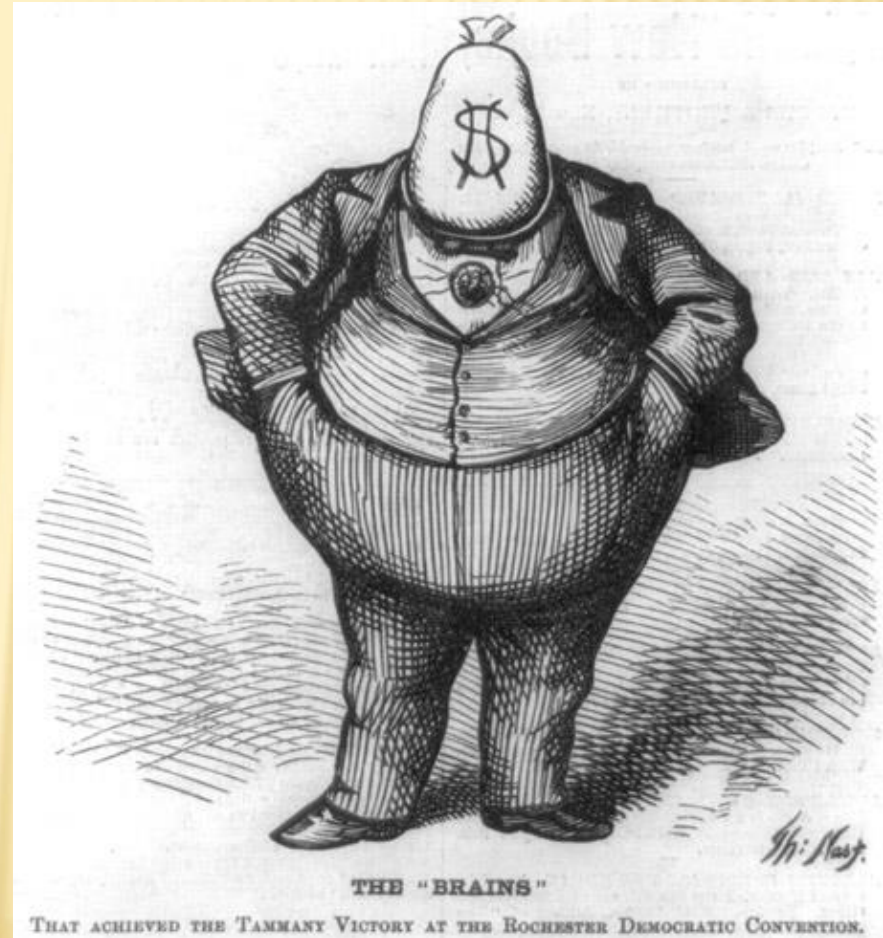
IDA TARBELL – MUCKRAKING JOURNALIST

The author of *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, Ida Tarbell was an author and a journalist for *McClure's Magazine*. Tarbell attacked the Standard Oil Company for violating the law: demanding rebates, and engaging in anti-competitive practices which violated the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Her work encouraged TR to sue!



THE SHAME OF THE CITIES – LINCOLN STEFFENS

In *The Shame of the Cities*, Lincoln Steffens exposed widespread corruption in major cities' local governments. Mayors, city council members and political bosses were found to be consistently accepting bribes and kickbacks, engaged in voter fraud, and openly corrupt. Once Steffens began the investigation, local journalists in regions across the country piled on. Progressives worked to create new styles of government – like city managers and commission systems – and more accountability for mayors and city councils were instituted in hopes of improving the quality of local government.



HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES – JACOB RIIS

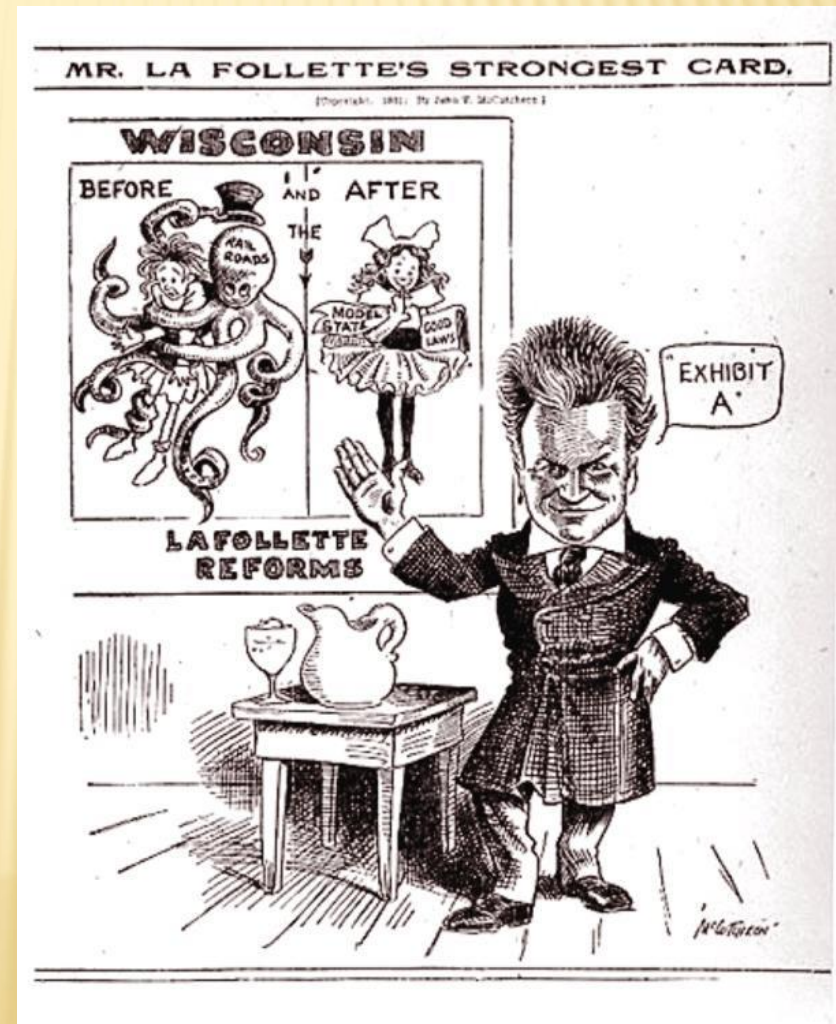
Jacob Riis was a New York City photographer who was compelled by what he photographed to become a forceful advocate for the poor – and particularly for poor children. Riis was the author of *How the Other Half Lives* – a muckraking photo-essay exposing the poverty, crime, and desperation of immigrant families in New York's poorest communities. He stated: "When nothing seems to help, I go look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before."



“FIGHTIN’ BOB” LA FOLLETTE

The Wisconsin System:

As the Senator from the state of Wisconsin, Robert “Fightin’ Bob” La Follette was well known for his efforts to empower ordinary consumers and voters. He believed in economic justice – not the controlling interests of the railroads – and greater power for voters – more direct democracy, and less corruption from government officials on the local, state, and national level. The reforms on the next slide were all a part of his “Wisconsin System.”



PROGRESSIVE VOTING REFORMS

The “Wisconsin System” consisted of a variety of reforms intended to empower ordinary voters:

- o The Primary System – *Instead of allowing party leaders to pick their candidates, an election in which voters can choose their candidates is held.*
- o The Recall – *a process by which people may vote to remove an elected official from office.*
- o The Initiative – *a process that allows voters to put a bill before the state legislature – without sponsorship by any particular delegate or member.*
- o The Referendum – *a way for the people to vote directly on a new law – or a tax increase.*

THE 17TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

- The 17th Amendment to the Constitution provided for the direct election of Senators by voters.
- Previously, Senators had been chosen by state legislatures – for example, the Virginia General Assembly.
- Today, Senate elections are statewide contests decided by the popular vote.

THE SENECA FALLS CONVENTION OF 1848

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were the organizers of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. This was the first time in American History that women had demanded the right to vote. The document they crafted, The Declaration of Sentiments, had plenty of flaws, but it's basic principle was simple: the democratic process must be expanded to include women.



NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony established this organization in 1869. They sought a constitutional amendment to grant woman voting rights. While the goals of the women's movement were similar, there were a variety of different paths to the objectives; therefore, a number of different groups were formed. The American Woman Suffrage Association was one rival group – founded by Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone. This group favored women advocating for the right to vote state by state.

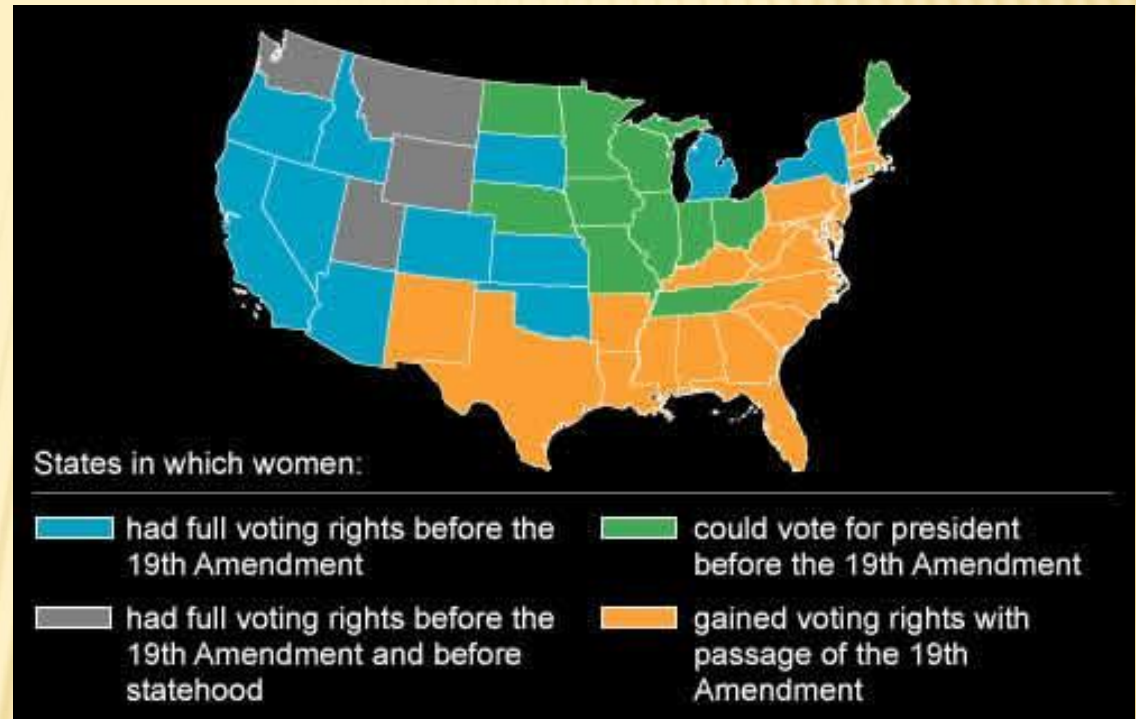


Susan B. Anthony

- ❖ Wyoming
- ❖ Idaho
- ❖ Utah
- ❖ Colorado

While states and territories listed above were the first to grant women suffrage rights, most Western states had elected to allow women to vote before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed.

Woman's Suffrage Before the 19th Amendment's Passage



WESTERN STATES GRANTED WOMAN SUFFRAGE BEFORE THE NATION...

Carry Chapman Catt became the leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1915 – after Alice Paul had left the organization to pursue more radical methods with the National Woman's Party. Catt decided that protests, sit-in demonstrations, and hunger strikes were less effective than political cooperation. Therefore, she aligned herself with Progressive President Woodrow Wilson's re-election campaign, organized women to support the war effort during World War I, and continued to press for an amendment to the Constitution. In 1919, her strategy worked. Women gained the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.



THE NATIONAL AMERICAN WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

The Triangle Shirtwaist Company had been experiencing labor unrest: women demanding breaks, improved air quality, and excused lunches. In a draconian measure meant to instill discipline, the company decided to enforce clock-in times and lock workers on the floor, to prevent lost labor. A fire broke out that week, and almost 150 young immigrant women died from smoke inhalation, burns, or by jumping nine floors to their death. The needless tragedy did create a desire for change. Fire codes and laws requiring occupational safety were passed. However, none of the families who lost loved ones were ever compensated in any way. In fact, the company received payment on an insurance policy which they used to create a new factory – without paying any of the families for their loss.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911



THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FIRE OF 1911

THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

The goals of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union – and other temperance groups like the Anti-Saloon League – were originally simply to reduce the consumption of alcohol in America – for the public's health and in order to preserve the family. Later in the 1800s, however, momentum built for a more ambitious goal – to ban the consumption and sale of alcohol all across the United States of America. The crowing achievement of the movement – if we can call such a failed policy an achievement – was the passage of the 18th Amendment, or Prohibition.



Carry Nation of the WCTU

EUGENE VICTOR DEBS, SOCIALIST

Eugene V. Debs was the leader of the American Railroad Worker's Union and a member of the Socialist Party. He sought government control of major corporations which influenced the public welfare, and advocated for all of the generic goals of unions in the process: higher wages for workers, shorter working days, safer working conditions, worker's compensation and health care, and equality among laborers regardless of race or sex.

